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universe, thereby immeasurably magnifying the greatness of God, so will the evolutionary view of the world, theistically interpreted and wrought out, give us a truer and more glorious doctrine

of God, envelop us more intimately in his immediate activities, and enable us to realize as never before that "in him we live and move and have our being."

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## ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BOOK OF GENESIS

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*The study of the Old Testament has made great advances in the last twenty-five years. Yet, there has grown up an entire generation, many of whom are still uninformed of the elementary positions now generally held by Old Testament scholars. These articles by Professor Paton admirably set forth some of these positions. Of course, every man must give his personal coloring to what he writes, but, unless we are greatly mistaken, these statements will be accepted as a sort of common divisor of views held by Old Testament scholars of the historical literary school the world over.*

### I. The Creation

A hundred years ago our knowledge of the early history of the world was derived exclusively from the Bible and from the legends preserved by Greek and Latin authors. In the course of the last century a wealth of new information has come to light through the discoveries of astronomy, geology, archaeology, ethnology, philology, and comparative religion. These have given new meaning to the statements of the Bible and have supplied many gaps in its narrative. The purpose of the series that begins with the present article is to show in the successive periods of the world's ancient history how our knowledge has been enlarged by modern discoveries, and how these discoveries are

to be correlated with the statements of the Bible. Accordingly, we take up first the primeval period, or period that preceded the appearance of man.

#### A. The Sources for This Period

1. *The scientific account of creation.*—The original records of the world's earliest history are furnished by astronomy and geology. These records are written in the constitution of the solar system and in the rock strata and fossils of the earth. They are contemporary documents, and their testimony has unquestionable authority.

2. *The account in Gen. 1:1—2:4a.*—This narrative is the beginning of P, or the Priestly Document, one of the four

main records from which our present Pentateuch is derived. It was not committed to writing until about 500 B.C., but the oral tradition on which it was based went back to a high antiquity. This tradition cannot have originated at the time of the creation since man did not yet exist on the earth. The usual theory in the church has been that it was supernaturally revealed by God to Moses, but this is unlikely because there are no analogous cases in the Bible where God has revealed lost history to men.

Such speculations have been set aside in modern times by the recognition that this story has been borrowed by the Hebrews from the Babylonians. Berosus, a Babylonian priest of the time of Alexander the Great, wrote in Greek a history of primeval times closely similar to the Hebrew narrative. It used to be supposed that he had derived his information from the Hebrews, but in recent years the Babylonian prototypes of his statements have been discovered. In 1873 George Smith found among the relics of the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668-626 B.C.) a series of seven baked-clay tablets that contained a story of creation remarkably similar to that found in the first chapter of Genesis.

The theory that this account was borrowed by the Assyrians from the Hebrews is impossible because a similar account was found at Sippar by Rassam in 1882, written both in Sumerian and in Semitic Babylonian. Most of the religious ideas of the Semitic Babylonians were derived from their Sumerian predecessors, and this tablet shows that the tradition of creation was ulti-

mately of Sumerian origin and went back to a date before 3000 B.C. This story, accordingly, was in existence in Babylonia at least two thousand years before Moses.

The theory of a common primitive Semitic original for both the Hebrew and the Babylonian narratives is precluded by the pronounced Babylonian type of the material. The idea of a creation out of a primitive watery chaos would naturally arise among the Babylonians whose land was inundated every spring by the Euphrates and the Tigris. Other elements in the early chapters of Genesis, such as Eden (Gen. 2:8), the Tigris and Euphrates (2:14), the tower of Babel (11:9), are also clearly of Babylonian origin. The only possible theory is that the Hebrew account has been borrowed in some way from the Babylonian.

If this story of creation is ultimately of Babylonian origin, there is no reason why we should expect it to correspond with the account given by modern astronomy and geology. The ancient Babylonians knew nothing of our modern science, and there is no evidence that they had a divine illumination superior to other peoples of antiquity.

3. *The account in Gen. 2:4b-25.*—This is derived from the so-called J document of the Pentateuch that calls God Jehovah. It was written in the kingdom of Judah about 850 B.C. It is derived from oral tradition that seems to have gone back ultimately to the Arabian Desert, the primitive home of the Semitic forefathers of Israel. It represents the earth as originally an arid waste and creation as beginning with the production of moisture (Gen.

2:4b). The garden that Jehovah plants (2:8) is a palm-oasis in the desert. The description of the location of the garden in 2:10-14 is, however, clearly of Babylonian origin, since Edinu, or Eden, is the name of a Babylonian region between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, and since these two Babylonian rivers are mentioned. No Babylonian counterpart has yet been found for the main strand of this narrative.

### **B. Scientific Value of the Hebrew Narratives**

Neither the narrative of Gen., chap. 1, nor of Gen., chap. 2, is in accord with the teachings of modern science.

1. *The cosmogony.*—In Genesis the earth is conceived as a stationary disk resting upon "the waters under the earth." The "firmament" is a solid crystal dome that supports "the waters above the earth." In front of this dome the sun, moon, and stars move round the earth. Here, as elsewhere in the Old Testament, the antique, pre-Copernican conception of the universe is disclosed.

2. *The antiquity of the world.*—The P document in Genesis gives a complete chronology in the form of genealogical tables telling how old each man was when his oldest son was born. On the basis of these tables the creation will have to be dated, as Archbishop Ussher calculated it, about 4000 B.C. According to archaeology, this date falls within the historic period in Egypt and Babylonia. According to geology, the first appearance of man was thousands of years earlier; and according to astronomy, the beginning of the world was millions of years earlier.

3. *The duration of creation.*—According to Gen., chap. 1, creation occurred within a period of six days. There is nothing in Hebrew usage that justifies the interpretation of "day" as "period." When we are told after each day's work, "and the evening and the morning were one day," it is clear that a literal day is meant. In like manner the statement of Gen. 2:3, that "God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it because in it he rested from all his works," is meaningless unless a literal Sabbath is meant. P is very fond of exact statistics, and if he had meant "ages" by his "days" he would undoubtedly have told us how many years these ages included.

4. *The method of creation.*—According to Gen., chap. 1, and Gen., chap. 2, each new form of life was a special creation by God. According to science, all sorts of intermediate forms are found between species, so that it is probable that the higher have been developed by minute variations out of the lower.

5. *The order of creation.*—The narrative of Gen., chap. 1, bears a superficial resemblance to the modern doctrine of evolution in that it traces the creation of life from lower to higher, but in details it is contrary to astronomy and geology. The order of creation in this chapter is (1) chaos, (2) light, (3) firmament, (4) dry land and higher flowering plants, (5) sun, moon, and stars, (6) all water animals and birds, (7) all land animals and man.

According to science, the order of creation was as follows: (1) the stars, (2) the sun, (3) the outer planets, (4) the earth, (5) the inner planets, (6) the moon, (7) unicellular organisms not yet

differentiated into plant or animal, (8) invertebrate animals and seaweeds, (9) vertebrate fishes, insects, mosses, and ferns, (10) amphibious vertebrates and lower flowering plants such as the pines, (11) reptiles, (12) non-placental mammals, (13) birds, (14) higher flowering plants, (15) placental mammals, (16) man.

The order of creation in Gen. 2:4b-25 is totally different both from the account of science and from the account in Gen. 1:1-2:4a. It is as follows: (1) earth, (2) water, (3) man, (4) plants, (5) animals, (6) woman, and apparently last of all (7) heaven (2:4b). Here creation proceeds from higher to lower. Even if we succeed to our satisfaction in harmonizing Gen. 1:1-2:4a with science, we can do nothing with the duplicate account in 2:4b-25. The conclusion that we reach, accordingly, from a study of Gen., chaps. 1, 2, is that these traditions contain neither astronomy nor geology, but that they are primitive Hebrew and Babylonian theories concerning the origin of the world and of man. They are not the science of the twentieth century A.D. but of the twentieth century B.C.

### C. Religious Value of These Traditions

This conclusion is not inconsistent with the high religious value of these narratives. Both declare belief in one spiritual God, the creator of all things.

The gross polytheism of the Babylonian creation-story and of other ancient Semitic cosmogonies has been purged out, and the result is a sublime confession of faith that can still be used by the modern Christian. When, however, the ancient Hebrews wished to express this faith, they were compelled to use the scientific thought and language of their day. The Judean writer of the ninth century B.C. stated his creed in terms of the primitive science of the Arabian Desert. The priestly writer of the sixth century B.C. stated his creed in terms of the better science of the Babylonian priests. We of today state our creed in terms of modern astronomy, geology, and biology. Our descendants will state their creed in terms of a still more accurate science and philosophy; but through all the changes of scientific thought it will still be the same creed trying to express itself, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." The primitive Semitic science of Gen., chap. 2, and the Babylonian science of Gen., chap. 1, have given place to a better science, but their religious belief in one creator, God, is still the faith of the church. These ancient Hebrew narratives are not true astronomy and geology, but they are true religion; and therefore they are revelation, for revelation is not information about natural science but about the nature of God.

## II. The Origin of Man

The earliest written records in Babylonia and Egypt date from about 4000 B.C., but back of these archaeology discovers a long series of remains that

testify that our race was already ancient when writing was first invented. In this section we must consider the earliest history of mankind as it is disclosed by

archaeology and its relation to the narratives in Gen., chaps. 3-5.

### A. The Sources

1. *The scientific account of primitive man.*—This account is based upon objects left by man in the gravel-beds of rivers and in the strata on the floors of caves. It is as certain as is the testimony of geology.

2. *The account of primitive man in Gen., chaps. 3-5.*—This narrative is composed of alternate extracts from the J and the P documents. Both are derived from the oral tradition of ancient Israel. Recent archaeological discoveries show that these stories, like Gen., chap. 1, go back ultimately to Babylonian sources. Most of the material has parallels in the great Babylonian poem known as the Gilgamesh-Epic. Portions of twelve large tablets of this epic were found in the library of Ashurbanipal (668-626 B.C.). These tablets are known to have been copied from old Babylonian originals. A fragment published by Hilprecht in 1910 (*Babylonian Exposition of the University of Pennsylvania*, Series D, Vol. I) dates from about 1500 B.C. Another fragment, published by Scheil (*Recueil de travaux*, XX [1899], 55-61), is dated in the eleventh year of Ammisaduka, king of Babylon (ca. 1800 B.C.). In a recent publication Dr. Poebel announces the discovery of portions of this epic dating from about 1900 B.C., written in Sumerian, the primitive language of Babylonia (*Museum Journal, University of Pennsylvania*, IV [1913], 41-50). Finally Professor Langdon of Oxford has published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, June,

1914, a preliminary account of another Sumerian fragment of the poem that narrates both the Flood and the Fall of Man. It is certain, therefore, that the Gilgamesh-Epic is as ancient as the Creation Story. It was probably in existence as early as 3000 B.C.

The Enkidu (Eabani) episode in the Gilgamesh-Epic has many parallels with the story of Adam and Eve. Enkidu is created out of the ground. He is a wild, primitive man with long hair who lives with the beasts of the field. So Adam has at first the animals brought to him as companions by Jehovah. Through the woman U̇hat, Enkidu is led away from association with the beasts and attains the dignity of true manhood. Similarly Adam finds that the beasts are no companions for him when the woman appears on the scene. Enkidu is deeply enamored of U̇hat and clings to her when the beasts flee away from his new-found manhood. So Adam recognizes that Eve is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and that he must leave all else to cleave to her. Enkidu and U̇hat are naked but unashamed, so also are Adam and Eve. U̇hat tempts Enkidu to leave his present life by the promise that he shall become like one of the gods. So Eve seduces Adam with the assurance that he shall become as God. Through U̇hat Enkidu loses his life. Similarly through Eve the curse of death comes upon Adam. Even the name U̇hat has probably etymological connection with Haw-wa(t), Eve (see Jastrow, "Adam and Eve in Babylonian Literature," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XV [1899], 193-214). In the tablet lately published by Langdon we read: "He took the *am̃haru* plant

... he ate ... the plant which wrought their fate therein she found. The goddess Ninḥarsag in the name of the god Enki uttered a curse. Henceforth life until he dies let him not behold." The surprising thing in this account is that the eater of the forbidden fruit who loses immortality is not Adam, the first man, but Noah, the founder of the new race of men.

The long-lived antediluvians of Gen., chaps. 4, 5, have been known to us from Berosus' account of the ten kings of Babylon that reigned before the Flood. Now they appear in the Sumerian tablets discovered by Poebel in 1912. Methushael in Gen. 4:18 is a name of pure Babylonian formation.

It appears, accordingly, that the narratives in Gen., chaps. 3-5, are borrowed from ancient Babylonian literature. If this be the case, there is no reason why we should expect these stories to be scientifically accurate. They are not contemporary records of primitive man nor are they special revelations given to the Hebrews.

## **B. Historical Value of the Hebrew Narratives**

When we compare these stories with the account of primitive man given by archaeology, a number of disagreements appear.

1. *The origin of man.*—Both of the narratives of Genesis regard man's appearance on the earth as due to a special act of creation on the part of God. In Gen. 1:27 the human species, male and female, was created by divine fiat on the sixth day. In Gen. 2:7, 22, man was molded by Yahweh out of the dust at the beginning of creation, and woman

was formed subsequently out of one of his ribs at the end of creation. Science, on the contrary, regards man as the last link in the chain of evolution. He was developed out of a lower type of animal that was also the progenitor of the apes, and this animal in its turn was the product of a development that went back to the beginning of life on the earth. In 1892 Dubois reported the discovery of a skull in the Island of Java that in its shape and capacity was intermediate between the apes and man. Scientists have disputed whether it is simian or human. Its discoverer named it *Pithecanthropus erectus*. The Neanderthal skull and the skull from Spy show intermediate stages of development between this Java skull and the skulls of the lowest existing races of men.

2. *The antiquity of man.*—The figures given in the Book of Genesis place the origin of man about 4000 B.C. This is contrary to the evidence both of archaeology and of geology. Archaeology shows that in 4000 B.C. civilization was already in full bloom in Babylonia and Egypt, and geology shows that the origin of man must be placed thousands of years earlier.

There is some evidence that man appeared as early as the Tertiary period of geology. In Tertiary gravel-beds in Kent, England, flints are found that are worn on their edges and surfaces in a different way from other stones in the beds. It has been much disputed whether these are natural or are due to human workmanship; but authorities are coming more and more to the opinion that they are the rude tools of the earliest race of men, or of a race that was well on the way to become human.

These remains are known as Eolithic, or "primitive stone," in distinction from Paleolithic, or "ancient stone."

There is general agreement that a being far enough evolved to be called man existed at the beginning of the Quaternary, or Glacial period. As to the date of his origin the prevailing opinion is that it cannot have been much less than 500,000 years B.C. A long time was necessary for the enormous deposits of the Glacial age, for the change of climate from the Glacial to the present, for the change of animals from the extinct species that were contemporary with primitive man to the present fauna, for the development of the different races of mankind, for the growth of the different languages, and for the progress of civilization to the high point that was already attained in Egypt and Babylonia as early as 4000 B.C.

3. *The civilization of primitive man.*—The history of early man is divided into five great periods: (1) the Eolithic, or period of natural stone implements; (2) the Paleolithic, or period of chipped flint implements; (3) the Neolithic, or period of polished flint implements; (4) the period of Bronze; (5) the period of Iron. The first three preceded the invention of writing.

The remains of the Eolithic period are stone implements that have been left in their natural form; those of the Paleolithic age have been shaped by pounding with another stone. The most primitive ones show the crudest workmanship and are associated with the bones of three extinct species of elephants. Later ones are contemporary with the mammoth, the reindeer, and the stag. Eolithic man had no fire. Paleolithic man

had fire, but he had no metals or pottery, no textile fabrics or domestic animals. He clothed himself in skins which he fastened with bone pins. He lived entirely by hunting and fishing, and his social organization did not go beyond the formation of small family-groups. He had considerable artistic skill both in modeling and in sketching, and on the walls of his caves and on pieces of ivory and stone he has left realistic drawings of the mammoth, reindeer, and other contemporary animals.

In contrast to this account of science the Book of Genesis represents man as possessing at the outset the civilization of the late Neolithic period. According to Gen. 2:5, 15; 3:17, 23, man was an agriculturalist from the beginning, but science shows that he did not take up agriculture until the end of the Neolithic age. In Gen. 4:2 Abel is a keeper of sheep, but domestic animals were not bred until Neolithic times. Cain built a city (4:17), but cities did not exist before the Bronze age. Tubal-cain, in the seventh generation from Adam, was "the forger of every cutting instrument of bronze and of iron" (Gen. 4:22); in reality the ages of Bronze and of Iron were separated by centuries, and iron did not come into use in Western Asia until about 1200 B.C. By eating the forbidden fruit Adam attained at once knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:5-7); in reality this knowledge has been slowly acquired through the experience of many centuries.

4. *The religion of primitive man.*—The J document assumes that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was known to mankind from the beginning; but Jehovah is a Hebrew word, and Hebrew was



certainly not the original language of the race. Archaeology shows that a low form of polydemonism, not monotheism, was the earliest religion of mankind.

5. *Other scientific difficulties in the narrative of Genesis.*—According to Gen. 3:17 f., thorns and thistles came into existence as a punishment for Adam's sin, but geology shows that these noxious plants long antedated the appearance of man. According to Gen. 3:3, 19, death was the consequence of Adam's disobedience; but death has always been in the world and is involved in the very constitution of our bodies. Man's primitive home, the Garden of Eden, with its wonderful trees that conferred life and knowledge by the eating of their fruit, and its animals that possessed the power of speech, evidently belongs to the realm of mythology rather than that of history.

The patriarchs before the Flood (Gen., chaps. 4, 5), who lived from 777 to 969 years, one of whom, Enoch, was translated to dwell with Elohim when he was 365 years old (the exact number of days of the solar year), are clearly mythical figures. A number of their names recur as gods among the other Semites. They seem to be ancient Semitic divinities that have been degraded by Hebrew monotheism to the position of prehistoric heroes.

The conclusion that we reach, accordingly, from a study of the stories of Gen., chaps. 3-5, is that they do not contain a scientific history of primitive times such as is given by archaeology, but that they are derived from early Babylonian speculations in regard to the origin of the human race.

### C. Religious Value of These Traditions

The religious value of a composition is distinct from its historical value. The parables of Jesus are not history, but fiction, yet they teach truth in the best possible way. Accordingly, the unhistorical character of the stories in Gen., chaps. 3-9, is in no way inconsistent with their high religious value. These ancient Babylonian traditions have been so transfigured by the spirit of the Hebrew religion that they have become worthy vehicles of divine revelation. The legend of the Garden of Eden has been stripped of its heathenism and made a wonderful expression of the origin and effect of sin in the experience of the individual. Sin is conscious violation of the will of God. It brings with it distrust of God and loss of fellowship with him. It is the cause of all the ills of life, and it makes men dread death as a curse. This is the theology of the early prophets, and they could have no better way of teaching it than through this ancient story. We have more modern ways of expressing the psychology of sin, but our experience is the same as that recorded in this chapter.

The resemblances of the Hebrew primeval stories to the Babylonian are not half so significant as are the differences. When we note these differences, we perceive how the spirit of the Hebrew religion entered into the old Babylonian traditions like a fire burning out the dross. Though the Hebrews derived these stories from Babylonia, they transformed them so completely that the divine character of the Old Testament religion become all the more apparent.